



CRIMETHINC. EX-WORKERS COLLECTIVE 2018-01-10

CONFRONTING ESCALATING REPRESSION IN GERMANY. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE G20, A CALL FOR RESISTANCE FROM THE RIGAER 94

NONPOLITICS G 20, HAMBURG, REPRESSION, RESISTANCE, RIGAER 94, RIOT

Following the popular rebellion in Hamburg during the 2017 G20 summit, the German state has sought to crack down violently on dissent. In August, the police shut down the most widely used German-language platform for radical politics. In September, the neo-fascist party Alternative für Deutschland secured seats in the German parliament. On December 5, police carried out 24 raids on leftist and autonomous infrastructure across Germany, seizing laptops, cell phones, and other means of communication. On December 18, the police published photos of people they accuse of participating in the G20 protests. Four days later, an anonymous threatening letter arrived at various autonomous centers around Berlin. Together, these events indicate a rapid descent towards tyranny. Yet German anarchists are resisting every step of the way. The Rigaer 94, a social center in Berlin, is emblematic of their courageous defiance. Here, we present some background on the Rigaer 94 and share translations of two statements on the conflict unfolding in Germany.

BACKGROUND: THE RIGAER 94

The Rigaer 94 is an autonomous housing project and social center in the Berlin neighborhood of Friedrichshain. The house has been at the center of many conflicts with the police, especially over the past two years. In 2016, the police declared the area immediately surrounding the Rigaer Strasse to be a "danger zone." This designates a zone in which the police do not have to obey the law, where they may act according to the supposed imperatives of "security." Berlin police regularly carry out illegal searches and set up control checkpoints in the neighborhood to harass inhabitants of the Rigaer Strasse.

In summer 2016, a 500-officer SWAT team raided the Rigaer Strasse and occupied the building's social center, The Kadterschmiede. Police held the social center for three weeks. In response to this siege, hundreds and hundreds of luxury cars were burnt in night actions all over Germany. A 5000-person demonstration mobilized people from all over Europe to defend the autonomous center. The demonstration clashed with the police, receiving support from the neighborhood and from autonomous centers across Europe.

The fate of the Rigaer was to be decided in a court battle. Yet on the night before the verdict was to be announced, a car belonging to the state's prosecutor caught fire. As a result, the prosecutor failed to appear in court the next day. The prosecution thus forfeited the case and the Rigaer Strasse won by default. Since then, the police have tried numerous times to provoke the autonomous center into conflicts.

This statement by the Rigaer gives a more in-depth look at the challenges it currently faces.



5000 people gathered in front of the Rigaer 94 on July 9, 2016 to defend it. The banner on the left reads "Government doesn't create order—only subordination."

RIGAER 94: CALL FOR RESISTANCE / RELEASE OF MANHUNT PHOTOS OF BERLIN POLICE

This text appeared in German on December 17, 2017.

The police state has set its forces loose: on Monday, December 18, the police published photographs of the faces of one hundred people who took part in the resistance to the G20 summit in Hamburg. The state has discarded the pretext of criminal prosecution entirely. Instead, it has made a major provocation against our movement by launching a new campaign of repression. This campaign is intended to strike fear into the hearts of those who participated in the G20 summit in order to crush all resistance. We will not be silent about this attack. The task of dragging this society of police collaborators, murderers, and fascists onto the funeral pyre remains before us.

It is clear to every reasonable person that the resistance in Hamburg was necessary. The forces of repression and the right-wing media have failed to reframe the narrative of the outpouring of defiance against the G20 summit. In a country that proclaims itself to be among the most democratic in the world, a country that presents itself as invincible, a country equipped with a sophisticated apparatus of violence, and in the face of enormous risks and serious consequences, tens of thousands of people dared to rise up. A mix of protests and offensive actions turned the summit of the ruling class into a disaster. A disaster for the city of Hamburg and a disaster for the powerful 20 leaders themselves, whose most important meeting now faces an uncertain future.

The summit was also a disaster for the police. In the Kaiser's Germany, in fascist Germany, and today in democratic Germany, the police have never limited themselves to a merely executive function. They have always served as the front line for this nation of murderers. We all know how deeply anchored the ideology of the police is in our society. A society that threw Rosa Luxemburg's corpse into the canal; that hunted Anne Frank behind her bookcase, to throw her into the extermination camps alongside millions of other "subhumans"; a society that ends up crowning the German-national military as the resistance¹—this is a fascist society. The security apparatus of Germany, which was established during those slaughters and is now used to relentlessly hunt rebels and anti-fascists in the name of the German people, is also fascist. Just a few years after its "liberation,"² this society and its executives were able to unite in the hunt against communists.

The German security apparatus was refined to perfection when it was used against guerrilla groups like the Red Army Faction, which carried out the long-overdue execution of Hanns Schleyer,³ a member of the Nazi Party. The faces of rebels were posted on every corner on manhunt posters; at every intersection, heavily-armed police maintained checkpoints. The death penalty was re-introduced and the nature of police work shifted. A new social discourse devised by a coalition of media, politicians, and police paved the way for state assassinations, psychological torture, and new special laws to be used against a large part of the population. The police state, still in its infancy when it murdered Benno Ohnesorg⁴, had to reckon with the permanent threat of insurrection.

Over the years, the German police have developed into a state within the state. Following the end of the urban guerilla groups and the new social movements of the 1980s and 90s, we are confronted with a society that can no longer generate any relevant opposition to the system. Not even when people are tortured and murdered in the bunkers of police stations, like Oury Jalloh from Dessau, who was burned alive by the fascist pigs. At the moment, the only factor inhibiting the completion of this totalitarian police state is its hesitance to scandalize civil rights activists too much. These civil rights activists, who like us are continually deprived of resources and support from civil society, have made their decision—whatever the state does cannot be wrong, whatever the press says is true: resistance is futile.

The time of comfortable protests is long gone. Today, German society has arrived at an extreme it hasn't reached in over 80 years. Those who resist face the following challenges:

- Mere presence at a demonstration can mean receiving a prison sentence of many years.
- The police can designate zones in which their own laws are valid.
- The police can designate anyone as dangerous in order to lock them up and surveil them completely without approval from a

judge.

Already in the lead-up to the G20 summit, sanctions were made against rebels. People who were designated by the police as "dangerous" received notice that they were forbidden to travel to Hamburg. These people were required to sign in every day at the police station while the summit was taking place, and were threatened with fines and jail time if they failed to obey. In a bid to intimidate rebels, police made their surveillance of certain people extremely obvious, not to mention the extensive secret surveillance that surely took place.

During the G20 summit, people undermined police control throughout the entire city of Hamburg, leading to the "adjustment" of citizens' rights and massive amounts of violence by heavily armed troops of police.



The mass demonstration on the final day of the G20 summit. Such scenes were significant because the image of the Kurdish leader Öcalan is banned in Germany. To see so many people bearing banners and flags with his face was an inspiring confirmation that the state had lost control.

The police activities before and during the summit were not qualitatively new. For many years now, the security apparatus has utilized every major event as an opportunity to mount new attacks on social conventions. What was exceptional this time was the number of attacks and how shamelessly they carried out these attacks against protesters.

What began after the summit was a qualitative leap. Some people invented conspiracy theories, claiming that the riots were carried out by the state in order to draw radical infrastructure into a final repression campaign in which it could be defeated once and for all. This kind of thinking is idiotic. We know precisely that the political disaster we created in Hamburg was desirable for us. In order to end this conspiracy theory, we claim full responsibility for everything that happened in Hamburg: from the first citizens' protests to the very last stone that flew at the police.

As a part of that radical infrastructure, shortly after the summit we organized a demonstration in solidarity with all of those who were targeted by repression. In the future, we will not shirk our responsibility to take revolt further. Those who can only see state conspiracy behind every act of struggle deprive resistance of all its characteristics; they have no legitimacy to speak in the name of revolt.

It is clear that the state is fighting to ensure that its narrative of the events is the definitive one. It must conquer the narrative as it conquers everything else: our lives and our social structures, the environment and technology. In this battle for capitalist and nationalist ends, the state will always end up demanding fascism. With the same tactics, they try time and time again to delegitimize resistance by branding it criminal, antisocial, and apolitical. For this purpose, the German state can rely on its police, its media, and the German people, as well as its representatives.

It's difficult to say who is the sleaziest of all participants in this process is. The boss of Soko schwarzer block,⁵ who would hunt everything he could get his hands on with the same fervor; or the nauseating Scholz,⁶ who represents the rotten bourgeoisie of Hamburg and their fancy cars; or the representatives of the press who serve to carry out PR work for the police; or the craven police collaborators, who deliver people up to brutal repression with the pictures they took with their cell phones, who would rather march behind every Hitler figure than take their lives in their own hands.

Some laughed at the latest wave of raids, which we saw coming far in advance. Others laughed because they knew that Fabio,⁷ a nice young man from Italy, would be a problem for the state's strategy of repression. However, we should not underestimate the police strategy. An essential part of this strategy is to use PR to achieve long-term sovereignty of interpretation over the events in Hamburg.

All the same, who would have thought that so many months later, thanks to their regular appointments with the press, the G20 would still be a top theme on the daily news? And who would have thought that despite having almost unlimited resources at their disposal, their professional press work would fail without our doing anything?

For these reasons, and on the occasion of the manhunt for participants in the Hamburg riots against the G20, we want to emphasize anew the importance of our struggle against the state—against fascist organizations like the police, the secret services, and the right-wing structures—and also against the collaborators and informants within the population and the press. Fabio and everyone else who remains defiant in front of the judge are role models demonstrating a dignified approach to dealing with repression. The same goes for everyone who sends messages of solidarity to those targeted by repression, despite the intimidation of the state.

On the occasion of the police manhunt and the state's call for a new wave of denunciations against 100 people, we have decided to release photographs of 54 police officers who took part in the eviction of the Rigaer Strasse last year. We would be glad to receive any tips, including where these police officers live and where we can meet them in private. Aside from taking part in the eviction, they should also be held responsible for all the violence they unscrupulously perpetrated during the three-week-long siege of our neighborhood in Freidrichshain.

It is important that we stop hesitating and put our strength into mobilizing solidarity and structures that are capable of action. The

demonstrations⁸ after the raids were a beginning. After the next raids, we must become even more numerous. It is important that when all else fails, we take the streets to show our solidarity with all the comrades who are hunted by the henchmen of the ruling class.

So—out into the streets! Determined and angry, despite the repression, we will fight against the ruling order!

taken from here

Foto: Robby Basler

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